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SUBJECT: INTER-ETHNIC VIOLENCE IN SOUTHEASTERN CHAD:
PERSPECTIVES FROM HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The recent inter-ethnic violence in southeastern Chad, which has its roots in historical divisions and competition for land resources, has been amplified by deteriorating relations between Chad and Sudan, according to human rights researchers groups visiting the region. While an international peacekeeping force may deter future violence, a long-term solution must address land resource management and develop an appropriate conflict resolution mechanism. END SUMMARY.

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ORIGINS OF INTER-ETHNIC VIOLENCE
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¶2. (SBU) Researchers from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International recently met with the Ambassador to discuss their findings following weeks of research in southeastern Chad. These weeks have witnessed a series of inter-ethnic clashes that left hundreds of civilians dead and prompted Chadian authorities to institute a state of emergency in November. According to these researchers, the conflict in eastern Chad is a result of dwindling land resources, and a breakdown in traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Historically, conflicts over land resources have occurred between Arabic nomadic groups and the sedentary pastoralists belonging to the Dadjo and Moro ethnic groups. Arabs have asserted that the land is theirs for grazing, and the pastoralists claim the land is theirs for agricultural activity. In the past, when disputes arose, conflicts were resolved through the traditional resolution mechanism, in which local leaders rendered decisions after hearing claims by the parties. In most cases, regardless of the ethnicity of the arbitrator, the decisions were respected by the parties.

¶3. (SBU) Recently, as arable land becomes more difficult to come by, the competition for resources has become more fierce. Arab nomads interviewed by these researchers claimed that Dadjo pastoralists shot and killed many of their cattle, and were cornering off land using barbed wire, with the intention to injure their livestock. Dadjo claimed that the Arab nomads were overgrazing the land, and allowing their livestock to destroy critical food crops. Amplifying the tension was the perception among the Arab communities that Dadjo local leaders were rendering decisions in disputes in favor of their Dadjo kinsmen. Several arabic nomads interviewed argued that their claims of Dadjo attacks on their cattle were ignored by the local Dadjo leaders.

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INVOLVEMENT OF CHADIANS AND SUDANESE GOVERNMENTS, REBEL GROUPS
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14. (SBU) In this environment, clashes between Arabic nomads and Dadjo pastoralists took place. The researchers point out that while some assert that the Government of Sudan is supporting Arab attacks against the Chadian communities to destabilize the Deby regime, they themselves see no evidence of such a strategy. They do observe assistance from Sudanese Arab groups (many of whom come from the Janjaweed militias in Darfur) for Chadian Arab groups. This support is driven by the belief that Chadian and Sudanese Arabs are one in origin (a notion referred to as the Wahediya) and should support each other in times of crisis. The researchers have been able to confirm Sudanese arms and munitions used by these militias, indicating that the GOS does provide some level of support that arrives in the hands of the Arab groups. They also point out that while that they have no evidence of direct links between Chadian rebels groups coming from Sudan and these Arab militias, Chadian rebels are probably taking advantage of the power vacuum left after the attacks to secure areas as a possible base to launch attacks against the Chadian national army.

15. (SBU) The Dadjo's support base is more multi-faceted in scope. The researchers have identified instances of the Chadian national army arming popular and local defense forces (the Toroboro) trying to combat attacks by Arab nomads. They do note that the support is minimal, and consists more of weapons and munitions sales to local groups in exchange for food supplies. The researchers claim that support by Sudanese rebel groups is much more prevalent and wide-spread. They point out the example of Hassan Yunus, a local Dadjo warlord, who, in response to an attack by Arab militias, turned to Nouri Minnawi, a field commander Justice and Equality Movement, who provided arms and munitions to Yunus. In return for these weapons and munitions, Sudanese rebel groups are permitted by local leaders to recruit members of

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the Dadjo community to fight for the Sudanese rebel groups (such as the JEM and National Redemption Front) in Darfur. In some cases, Chadian officials assist in these efforts. The researchers point to Bechir Djabir, an informal advisor and relative of President Deby, as a Chadian authority aiding the JEM and NRF's recruitment efforts.

PEACEKEEPING FORCE NOT ENOUGH

16. (SBU) While the media reports paint a picture of Arab militias killing sedentary African villages, the researchers point out that the level of violence does go both ways: Arab groups are killing Dadjo, and vice versa. It is true that nature of the killing is asymmetrical, according to these researchers, probably rooted in the Arabic nomadic groups' belief that one Arab death should result in the death of 10 Dadjo, to deter the Dadjo from engaging in further attacks.

17. (SBU) This mentality of violence to deter further violence, according to the researchers, may be minimally deterred by the presence of an international peacekeeping force, but the bloodshed will continue. In order to address the issues of the conflict, any international peacekeeping presence must be coupled with an active and intelligent engagement with local communities to address land resource issues and rebuild confidence in the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. An international force, according to the researchers, can be a band-aid to the problem, but will do little to fully heal the wounds of a conflict deeply rooted in ethnic divides and a competition for resources.

18. (U) Tripoli Minimize Considered.
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